1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

Feather Head-dresses

292 301 It cannot be denied that when the Orokaiva is in 'full dress' the *tout ensemble* is strikingly fine. We cannot claim that he has shown a great aptitude for the decorative arts in general, but he has shown no small amount of artistry in the decoration of his own person. The most imposing feature of his make-up is the head-dress of feathers. It is seldom worn complete save in the dance; in the warlike expedition (which I have never seen) it was no doubt considerably reduced.

The head-dress is built on piecemeal. The individual feathers are fixed in sets on arc-shaped frames, and one after another these sets are bound upon the mass of hair which is 292 gathered behind the head. The following is a description of 301 a dancer's head-dress which may be taken as fairly typical. 237 (1) The lowest stratum was a mass of the black hair-like feathers of the cassowary which fell back over his shoulders like a great mane. (2) Above this came a number of sets of the large white tail-feathers of the hornbill; (3) a set of hawk's feathers, dapple grey; (4) three or four sweeping plumes of the red-brown bird of paradise; (5) and lastly, several tiers of close-set feathers obtained from the smaller and more brilliant birds such as parrots, &c.

As I have named the various parts of the head-dress from back to front, the first may be pictured as falling over the back and shoulders, the last, viz. the tiers of parrot feathers, as rising above the forehead. The whole is well set off by a band of shells and dogs' teeth encircling the brow.

Ornaments

301 321 The ornaments, or *hambo*, of the Orokaiva are by no means without a certain richness and beauty. They are made for the most part with boars' tusks, dogs' teeth, and various kinds of shell, which components are set together in some half-dozen bold patterns or styles. The mellow colours of old ivory, the white and rose of shell, and the vivid points of scarlet seed find an admirable foil in the 301 native's brown skin. The *hambo*, it is true, are often dirty enough to blind the fastidious to their artistic worth; but

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

ash in the pottery fragments. For actual use the ash, which has a salty taste, is placed in a half coco-nut shell and watered; and the salty water percolates through the eye-hole of the coco-nut into the cooking-pot.

Stimulants

The habit of betel-chewing is universal among men, women, and even young children. There can be no question that betel, a mild and comparatively harmless stimulant, does much to make the native's life pleasanter, especially by reason of the good-fellowship which is the best argument for all intoxicants. Areca or betel palms grow in every village. The betel pepper (*Piper betle*) called *Hingi* grows wild in the bush and is transplanted into villages and gardens. A superior cultivated kind is called *Hingi petani*. Legends of the origin or discovery of the areca palm and the betel pepper have been recounted elsewhere.[1]

Lime (*O-asaa'*) is made by burning shell-fish from the sea or rivers. A small tower or pyre about 3 feet square and 3 feet 6 inches high is made of layers of dry sago branches laid criss-cross, and on each layer are set a number of shells. The pyre is lit from above in order to prevent premature collapse. It burns and cools rapidly, 'like paper'. The shells, which retain their shape, are transferred by improvised tongs to a sheet of banana leaf, which by being passed once or twice through the flames has become pliable. The shells are gently kneaded with mutterings of *ere ere!* 'Get up, hurry up!', which are meant to expedite the pulverizing process, and are cautiously sprinkled with water. Then the banana leaf is folded and left by a fire, presumably to hasten the slaking. If all this has been done carefully, the result will be a very fine soft powder.

The lime-pot (*O-kigi*) is a calabash with a stopper of closely woven strands of creeper. A somewhat more pretentious lime-pot, called *kasanga*, is furnished with a shell mouthpiece set in black native beeswax, and encrusted with gems of scarlet seed and white shell fragments. The spatula (*O-ta*) is commonly of black wood. The point is thrust into

[1] *Orokaiva Magic*, p. 123.